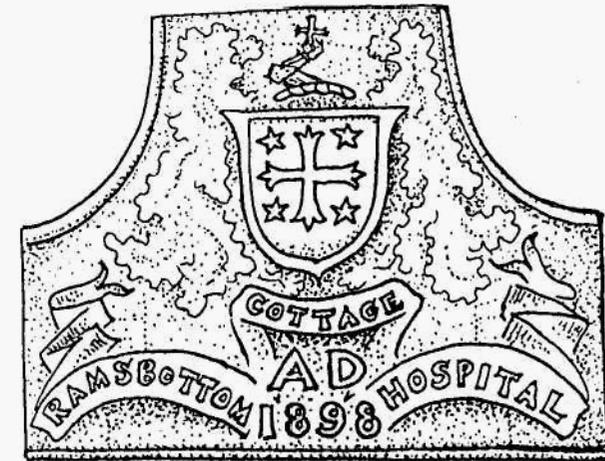




No 15

Autumn 1997

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RAMSBOTTOM HERITAGE SOCIETY
THE HERITAGE CENTRE

CARR STREET, RAMSBOTTOM, BURY BLO 9AE

Membership Enquiries please ring (01706) 828705

Other enquiries (01706) 821603

The objects of the Society shall be:-

- a) advance education of the public, by creating an awareness and interest in the study of the history and heritage of Ramsbottom. (As defined by the boundaries of the pre 1974 Ramsbottom Urban District Council.)
- b) locate relevant documents, records and artifacts. To retain, catalogue and/or copy them where possible, and to operate as an information centre.
- c) seek to protect the heritage of Ramsbottom.

1997-8 PROGRAMME

- Oct 15th Mr Harry O'Neill *Rawtenstall Past and Present* - Mr O'Neill is the Photographic Librarian of the Bacup Natural History Society (Illustrated.)
- Nov. 19th Mr Nick Grimshaw - *Conservation in Bury and Districts* (Illustrated.)
- Dec 10th Miss Dorothy Fawell - *Christmas Memories*
- 1998**
- Jan 21st Miss Margaret Curry - *Lady Anne Clifford* - The life and times of Lady Anne and her forty year fight to secure her rightful inheritance in Westmorland and Craven Yorkshire (Illustrated.)
- Feb 18th Miss Jo Durning - *The Lighter Side of Funerals* (A humorous look at the Burial Service) PHOTOGRAPHIC COMPETITION
- Mar 18th Mr Richard Catlow - *From Irwell Springs to the Sea - A fully illustrated journey along the River Irwell.*
- April 15th **Eleventh Birthday Meeting**
Mr Brian Unsworth - *Aspects of Nature* - A fully illustrated slide show of Nature and its beauty.
- May 20th **Annual General Meeting**
Mr George Clarke - *The History of Brass Bands.* Mr Clarke tells this story and hopes to be able to illustrate with SOUND!

All indoor meetings are held on the third Wednesday of the month in the Civic Hall, Market Place, Ramsbottom, 7.30 for 7.45pm

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FRONT COVER - The Aitken family's arms on the Ramsbottom Cottage Hospital, Nuttall Lane, the erection of which commenced in May 1898. Drawn by John Taylor

RAMSBOTTOM MISCELLANEA

The Society's Collection - known colloquially as 'The Archive', and representing a decade of accumulation, this now runs to thousands of items, including photographs, documents, books and a very limited number of artefacts. It is probably not well known that the entire collection has been catalogued and placed on a computer data-base. Unfortunately, we are physically running out of storage space at the Centre, our ancient Amstrad (rooted firmly in the protozoic period of computer evolution) is doomed, and perhaps most seriously our small 'Archive Team' can no longer manage the growing collection. Regrettably, the Committee has had to propose to members that we transfer the entire collection to Bury Archives, Edwin Street, where Kevin MULLEY has agreed to discuss how it could be made more readily available for research. Currently, access has been strictly limited on account of our voluntary status - we simply do not have the wherewithal to staff a publicly accessible repository.

Ramsbottom Heritage Centre - supposedly open from 1-00 to 4-30pm on weekend afternoons up to Christmas, visitors will have noticed recently that this simply has not always been happening. We are, quite simply, running out of helpers - only four keyholders are now able to open and close, whilst the number of regular helpers has dwindled. Volunteers are desperately needed - no special knowledge or skills are required, and a keyholder will always be present. You can talk to visitors, sell the odd booklet or help to make cups of tea. You won't get paid, but you will meet people who share your interest in the town's past, and you may make some new friends. Our helpers are a friendly lot, and there is no quicker way of learning about the town and its inhabitants, past and present. Do please consider this - otherwise we may well be down a slippery slope which leads to closure. Monthly meetings serve a valuable purpose in keeping a society together, but the loss of the Centre, I believe, would deprive us of a crucial focus -- remember what happened to the old Local History Society.

If you can help, please call i n one weekend to sign up for an hour or two. Alternatively, call Betty HOWARTH on 01706 822251 to indicate your interest.

Visits to the Centre - proof that our Centre is appreciated comes in the shape of the visits we get from groups either from the locality or from further afield - 28 children and staff from St Joseph's in May, 30 from St Paul's in July (my five year old daughter Hannah was most impressed!). John TAYLOR brought a group of walkers in June; Chadderton Historical Society came in August to hear myself and Dorothy describe the Society's activities; whilst 24 from St Paul's Ladies Group came in September to hear us play two of our Oral History tapes and learn about the Recording project.

Out of Town Members visiting Ramsbottom - it has been very pleasant recently meeting members who have made the journey back to their old roots in part to make the acquaintance of local members at the Centre. Unfortunately, if this coincides with a day when no one can cover at the Centre, such visitors risk finding it closed and being unable to make any contact. If you are coming up to Ramsbottom hoping to meet us, please ring someone first - that way we can be certain to have someone to meet you if the Centre does happen not to be open.

Da time Societ Meetings - our monthly Wednesday evening attendances have dropped recently. One solution may be to hold additional afternoon meetings at the Centre, with the standard format of speaker, refreshments and chats, possibly starting later this year. Watch the *Bur Times* for future news.

Oral Histor Project - our small but dedicated group is now working its way through the list of people who have in the past offered their names as interviewees. We have boosted the number of taped interview sessions in our collection to 17, a very wide range of reminiscences from World War I to virtually the present day being represented. As well as the master, a copy is made and a further copy is automatically given to the interviewee in recognition of their help. We will very soon exhaust our present list - please consider volunteering to be interviewed. It is an interesting and enjoyable experience to chat through the old times with an interested conversationalist, and you will be making a valuable, indeed a unique Andrew TODD, a ring on 01706 824511 any evening.

Andrew Todd

SOCIETY SKETCHES - LILLIAN CULLEN

We thought it an interesting idea to introduce members through these pages to some of the Society's active personnel, without whose contributions RHS would face extinction.

Lillian CULLEN has been giving spinning demonstrations at the Centre since 1988, when she joined our society, attracted she says by an interesting programme of monthly talks. Born in Manchester, she was drawn to teaching at an early age, war intervened and in 1942 she joined the Army, serving in an ack-ack unit in Kent, in the path of Doodlebug rockets.

After demob, she taught in Blackley where she rose to the headship of Crab Lane Infant and Junior School. A move to Greenmount Primary School brought her to live in Ramsbottom.

On retirement in 1988, she took up hand spinning at the Rochdale Spinning Club. Unfortunately, this group faces closure this year owing to a declining interest in the

craft. Maintaining an interest in education, she demonstrates spinning at local schools, as well as at the Centre on Bank Holidays and at December weekends.

Now living in Harwood, Lillian retains her links with the Society, her pleasant, smiling and affable manner making her popular with members and visitors (especially the young!)

Dorothy Moss

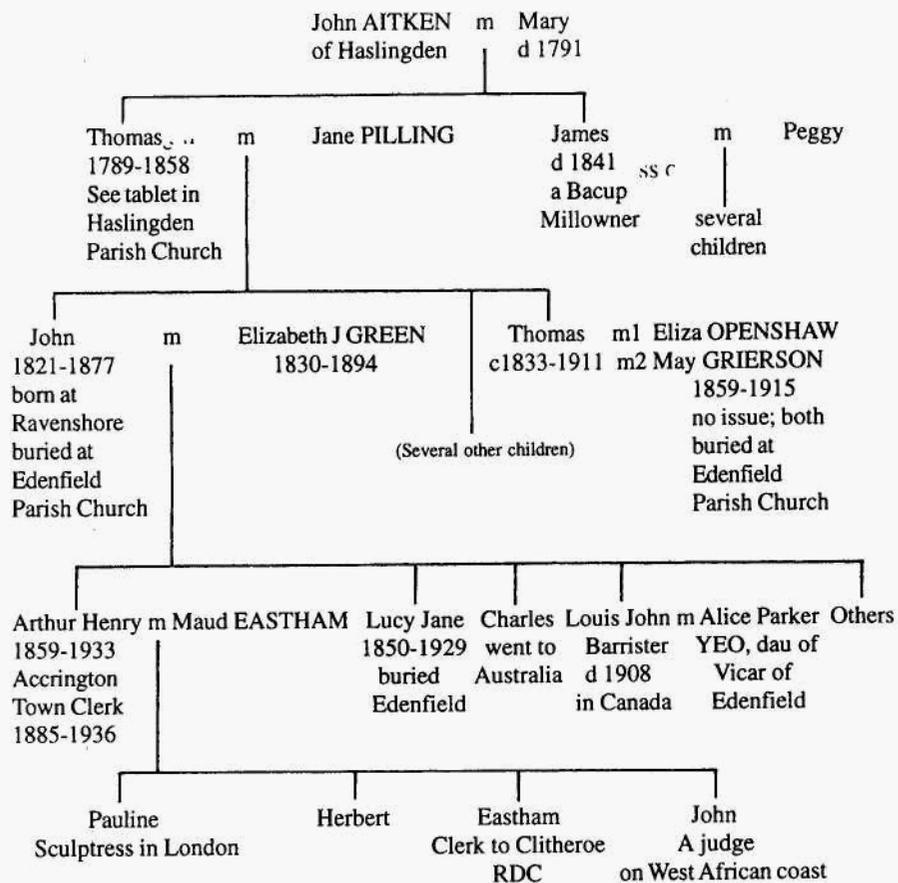
THE AITKEN FAMILY: MILLOWNERS AND PHILANTHROPISTS

To celebrate their tenth anniversary in 1993, Edenfield Local History chose as their logo the sundial above situated on the south wall of Edenfield Parish Church (near the door). To follow earlier articles on the STOCKDALES, the TURNBULLS and the PORRITTS, it seemed apt to cover the AITKENs for the tenth anniversary of Ramsbottom Heritage Society. The AITKENs passed like a cloud over the area from Haslingden to Holcombe (via Bacup and Irwell Vale). So who were they? Where did they live and work? What effects did they have locally and what traces are left in 1997? With vast help from John SIMPSON, John TAYLOR and Bill TURNER, I shall try to piece together their story. The brief family tree takes us back over 200 years, but I shall concentrate on the *two* Thomases and the younger John AITKEN.

The older Thomas lived at Chatterton House (still inhabited), almost opposite the factory of AITKEN and LORD where the famous riot took place on 26th April 1826.

The mob had destroyed hundreds of the hated new powerlooms in Helmshore, Rawtenstall and Edenfield, and AITKEN unsuccessfully tried to reason with them. Magistrate William GRANT read the Riot Act and six were killed by the troops. The mill later became a ruin and was demolished in 1896. The estate was bought by the PORRITTS who cleared the site and lodge and donated it as the recreation area which exists to this day. Thomas opened a new mill at Irwell Vale and went to live at Great Hey (across the bridge over the A56 from Edenfield Church). His wife was the daughter of the Baptist Minister at Goodshaw.

Their elder son, John, continued in the business at Irwell Vale but retired about 1874. He was a Captain in the 57th Lancashire Rifle Volunteers (Ramsbottom), living, and dying, at Elton Banks House. On Burnley Road, Edenfield, opposite the petrol station, this house is still inhabited. John served as a churchwarden in 1846 and owned Elton Banks Farm, a few fields higher, and now occupied as a home by Edenfield Local History Society's Treasurer! As the family tree shows, John's descendants did not work at the mills, but preferred civic roles or emigration, as far afield as Australia. Ironically, many of the 1826 rioters had been deported there. The younger Thomas. Later, the Irwell Vale Mill was extended into the long brick building still in use as the soap works, though part of the original above it has gone. The firm had specialised as makers of cotton sailcloth and felt for paper-making. Thomas enjoyed the fruits of the textile boom, living at Holcombe Hall. Moving to Flintshire, he died at Bodelwyddan Castle in 1911, but he was buried in Edenfield Churchyard. Still visible on Blackburn Road (just beyond the petrol station) is the 1940 datestone TA S Ltd on the former Spring Bank Mill which wound cones for Irwell Vale Mill. Earlier it had been a brewery. It is now BROWN and FORTH Ltd Chemicals.



The AITKEN Family of Haslingden, Edenfield and Holcombe

Though the AITKENs could not resist the national decline in the textile industry, they were unaffected by the world wars of this century, unlike the nearby TURNBULL and PORRITT families. Their workers' names survive on the memorial plaque outside the present soap works reception (MLO Plc), as do those of the PORRITTs workforce on the memorial on Stubbins Vale Road. This was resituated in 1997.

Beyond Lumb Old Hall was the site of AITKEN's Lumb Vale Mill. Until about 1920 this was to be JB WR SHARP's dye works but later turned to spinning, winding and weaving. During the 1939-45 war troops were housed there and Arnold RILEY of Bury recalls how the Duke of Lancaster's Own Yeomanry helped to clear the deep snowdrifts in 1940. Elsie TIMMINS of Peel Brow, who also worked there, recalls asbestos cloth being made for covering aircraft when it was owned by the DEWHURST family. Its chimney was demolished in 1975 and the rest piecemeal in the 1980s. The works canteen and social club near the Irwell Vale Methodist Church

was later inhabited by Geoffrey DEWHURST who died in 1996. Betty DARCY of Edenfield remembers how the works gates closed promptly and late-comers lost time. Kathleen MATHER was struck by the puttees worn on the soliders' ankles and told me that the mill produced fabric for tyres in the War. Bowker Street, Irwell Vale, was named after John BOWKER, the mill's builder and owner, and Aitken Street likewise reflects their control of local housing.

Although the surviving mills have changed their owners and products, there are other AITKEN reminders in the area. Lynne LONGWORTH's 1989 *Historic Notebook* on Edenfield Church records that the AITKEN sundial was repainted in 1838 for 3s 6d. In 1916 altar cloths and frontals were presented by Miss GRAY in memory of the AITKENs, who gave the organ in 1911. The commemorative programme for a Grand Bazaar, held in April 1900 to raise funds for the Aitken Memorial and Jubilee Hospital, relates how Thomas had recovered in October 1896 from a serious illness, and how his wife Mrs May AITKEN had conceived the idea of making the Hospital a Memorial as well as a Jubilee Cottage Hospital. Sited in Nuttall Lane, and known now as the Ramsbottom Cottage Hospital, its construction (between 1898 and 1900) and furnishing was in part funded by Mrs AITKEN. The frontage features the family coat of arms (see front cover). It is now a geriatric hospital. From 1910 to 1970 the AITKEN Sanatorium treated consumption and chest problems, and was given with its grounds by the AITKENs to Bury District Joint Hospital Board. In 1975 it was renamed DARUL - ULOOM and became a seminary for the training of Moslem priests, a new extension being added in 1988. The substantial complex is best viewed from Holcombe Hill. So, the imprint of the AITKENs remains on our area to this day, even though the family has all but gone.

In the 1996 BT Phone Book for Burnley, Pendle and Rossendale, there is just one AITKEN - in Ramsbottom.

Sources

The AITKEN Memorial and Jubilee Hospital Grand Bazaar (Commemorative April 1900)

John SIMPSON, especially for the family pedigree

John B TAYLOR, for drawings. See also his *Stories in Stone in Rossendale* (1988); and *Stories in Stone: Datestones in Ramsbottom* (1991)

William TURNER, *Riot! The Story of the East Lancashire Loom-Breakers in 1826* (1992)

IN SEARCH OF CARR FOLD

The 1990s has seen a spate of heritage architecture alongside Carr Street - both Pinner's Close (1996) and Grant Mews (1993) attempt, with debatable success, to echo building styles of the last century. Very few of the occupants of these houses will be aware that one of the earliest clusters of Ramsbottom's industrial housing once stood within yards of their front doors. Pedestrians straining up the top end of Carr Street, past its junction with Springwood Street and Callender Street, are the only people who will ever have spotted opposite Grant Mews the ruinous stonework

which can easily be taken for a boundary wall. In fact this marks one of the few physical remnants of Carr Fold, a tiny and in part self contained community which survived until the mid 1930s.

From the corner of No 82, Carr Street, the delightfully named Gutter Lane leads northwards in the direction of the *Old Mill Hotel*. To the left of this modest dirt track towers the huge wall of the *Rose and Crown* bowling green (which would have served well some medieval fortified town). To the right an uninteresting landscape of garages, sheds and overgrown allotments falls downwards towards the rear of the terrace on Springwood Street. It is hard to believe that this represents the site of one

town centre, and that at the time of the granting of the order for demolition in November 1935, a total of 23 people lived in its ten houses.

Carr Fold was in a dilapidated state at this time, according to Dr Hugh LAWRIE, the UDC's Medical Officer of Health. In his report recommending demolition, preserved in Bury Archives, he described the fold as unpaved and very uneven. All water had to be carried from a spring, over distances varying up to 177 feet from the houses, none of them having any internal supply. One privy midden with four compartments, continued LAWRIE, provides the sanitary accommodation for the nine houses ... up to 120 feet from the houses. The stonework of the cottage walls was weathered, and often cracked and bulging. The flag roofs were sagging and uneven, whilst the ground at the rear of No 1, Carr Fold, and the gable of No 3, was up to the level of the bedroom floors. The walls of the ground floors must have been built into earth, hence the dampness alluded to in the report. Nos 1, 5, 7 and 9, Carr Fold were especially small, each having a single downstairs room (with floor areas of between 160 and 200 square feet only), scullery and a single bedroom. Windows were small, often having no opening portion; ceilings were as low as 6'6"; floors were flagged; the houses were uniformly dark and ill-ventilated. Some bedrooms appear to have been open to the roof, judging by the description of No 5 as having a ceiling height of eight feet eight inches at the ridge but 4'7" at the eaves. Only one house in the Fold, No 80, Carr Street, had a back door.

It seems inconceivable that families could possibly live in such absurdly small, cramped conditions. But we know from Fred HANSON, who was brought up in one of these cottages, that they had to. Allowing for four dying between 1922-32, he writes grimly, there was always six, seven or eight at 7, Can Fold.²

Folds, so distinctive a feature of pre-industrial South East Lancashire, are believed to have constituted a nucleus of domestic textile manufacture, the farmer-weaver drawing his support spinners around him in a cluster of cottages. Could Can Fold have originated as an early industrial colony of this type? Indeed, how old were these cottages at Can Fold when they suffered demolition?

According to Dr LAWRIE in his report, the Fold was stone built and of considerable age, a datestone on No 3 bearing the date 1761. Confusingly, *three* was the consecutive number given in the schedule for demolition, *not* the actual house number, which was No 5, Carr Fold. Next door was No 3, Carr Fold (LEACH's shop), of which a photograph appeared in Ken BEETSON and Roger SHILTON's *Let's Look at Ramsbottom* (1977). This reveals the solid flagstone roof, large quoins and

square mullions consistent with the date 1761. The whole row (Nos 1 to 9) may have been built simultaneously.

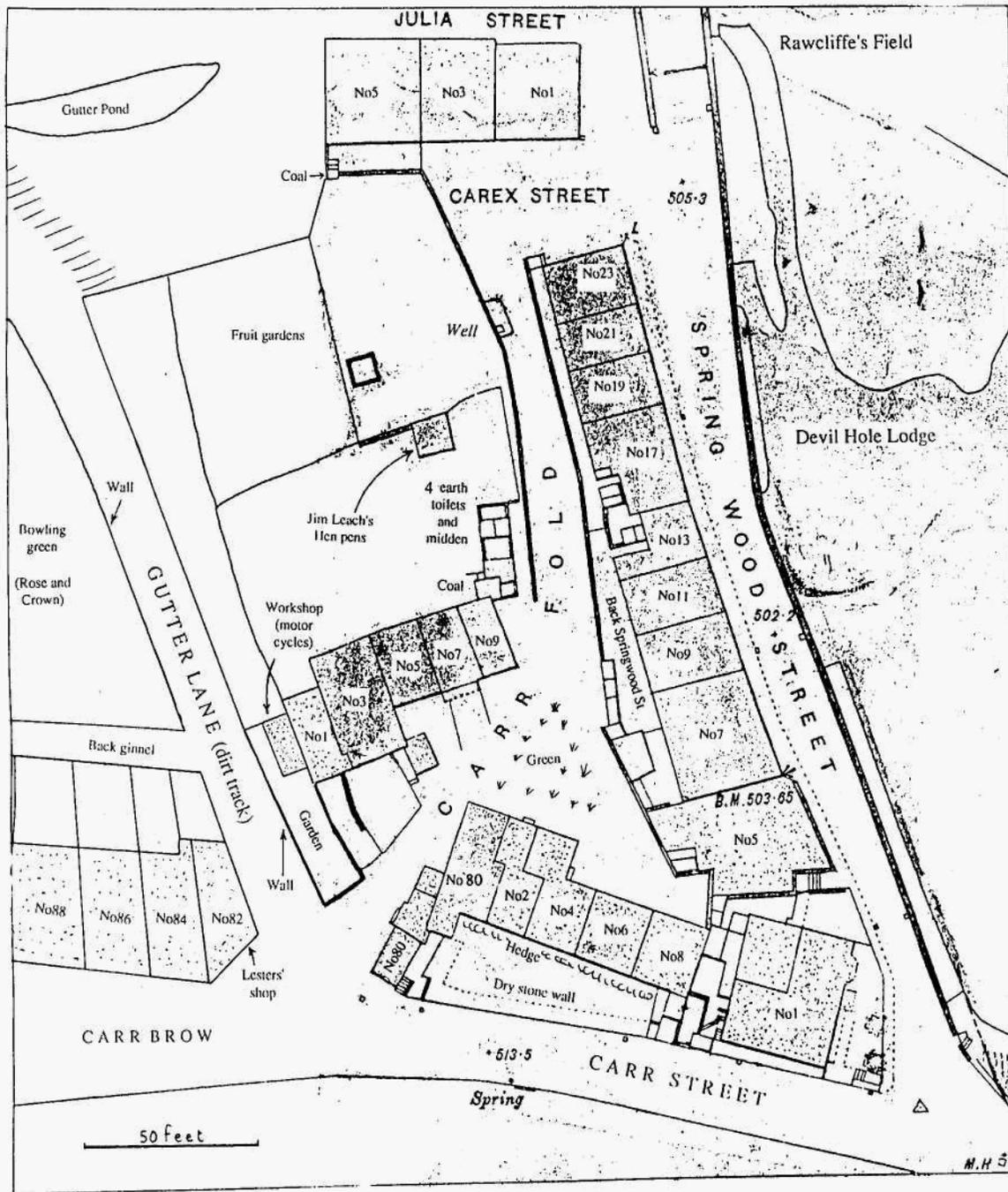
What sources are available to determine the dates of construction of houses in the Rarsbottom area? John SIMPSON has identified several entries in the court books of the Manor of Tottington which allude to Carr, but so far it has proved impossible to untangle them. There are no plans in the earlier court books, and references to field names which may now be lost and to houses without any precise name make identification of properties from single entries very difficult. Several members of the BUCKLEY family had property in the area in the 18th Century, but the identifiable field names are concentrated around the right angle turn of Carr Street into Tanners Street, a locality known as Lower Buckley Fold according to the 1842 Tithe Map and Schedule for Tottington Lower End, at Lancashire Record Office. More likely the area to be known as Carr Fold belonged to the KERSHAW family, and the 1761 house was probably built by Abraham KERSHAW. On 30 July 1783 Thomas KERSHAW of the Carr, yeoman sold to Robert MEADOWCROFT of Holcombe, yeoman, James MEADOWCROFT and Robert TICKLE shopkeepers a plot of land:

ten yards in length from east to west and six yards in breadth from north to south, being part of, and situate at the bottom of the Meadow at Carr and known by the name of the Folds, on the west side of the mill course, for the purpose of building an engine house ... with free liberty ... to go round the same and set ladders and other utensils for repairing the buildings now built or hereafter to be built thereon. And also free usage of the water and watercourse or mill race which runs through the said meadow ... in order to bring it conveniently to turn the wheel or wheels of the said engine house and buildings. ...^a

The consortium completed their building work, and by 23rd January 1788 (when they sold on to PEEL and YATES) the site had been transformed into a cotton carding mill, with dams, wheel race, aqueduct, water wheel, cog wheel, [and] shaft.⁵ Here I suspect are the origins of Carr Mill (which stood on the north side of Carr Street, just below its junction with Springwood Street) and its lodge, known as Devil Hole, and now a wild bird sanctuary. Some of the cottages at Carr Fold might have been built alongside the 1761 KERSHAW house about this time, to supply accommodation for millworkers.

The Manor of Tottington acted like a modern land registry, its court books recording down to the 1920s the conveyancing of even the smallest dot of property within the End. Of course the legal owner of any property would retain a copy of the court book entry, as proof of right of title, and it is such bulky manuscript copies which form the core of the collection of deeds which should pass to any modern purchaser. Unfortunately, if you do not ask, you may not get. One Bolton solicitor told me that, in such circumstances, it was policy to bin them - for once land is registered with the Land Registry at Lytham, the only original document of legal, as opposed to historical import is the earliest deed establishing right of title.

Clearly, the deeds relating to any property in Can Fold, would reveal much more about its age. Presumably, a demolition order would first necessitate compulsory purchase by Ramsbottom UDC. John SIMPSON informed me that Rossendale



Carr Fold in the 1930s

recall this very distinctive community. Fred writes in a very vivid and perceptive way, and I hope to use more of his material in future issues. Recalling details of the earlier parts of a century from its back end would challenge anyone, and there may be items **offact which can be amended - but this really is a unique record, and I do hope that it evokes a response in others. We would very much like to hear from any**

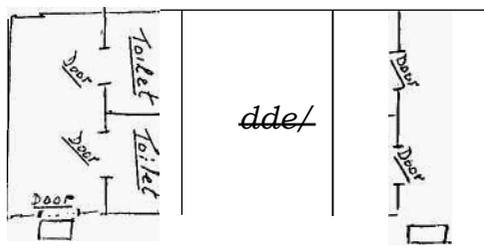
other former resident! - Editor

In the 1920s, Carr Fold was aptly named T Fold, as there were five cottages along the back of the Fold, and an oblique row of another five. If any housewife was ill, neighbours did the washing, cleaning and shopping.

We children used the entry to the Fold from Carr Street as a cricket pitch. Next to the 'pitch' was a triangle of grass which we called 'The Green', about 20 yards deep and 20 wide. Two or three times a year, a party was held here - a maypole was brought out and put up, tables, chairs and stools were fetched from each house, and the piano from KAYs. There was dancing to a wind-up gramophone - everybody danced. There was lemonade and kegs of beer.

Nearby was Devil Hole Lodge. Lodges (Jenny Green Teeths) up on the moors were deeper than they looked and dangerous, for in hot summers when we were roaming we used to drop in them to cool. In very hot weather I recall going into Springwood Lodge before school. Two were drowned in the Irwell at the back of the Cricket Field in the early 20s - it was deep in one or two places. Three or four were drowned in Devil Hole between about 1925 and 1930, one a suicide. We followed a man who ran up Carr one day, screaming he d drown himself. Up Springwood Street, up to Springwood Lodge - he climbed the bank, jumped in and jumped out - too cold! Water drained down from the moors through Taper Woods and into Gutter Pond, at the end of Gutter Lane. Now an ornamental pond by the *Old Mill*, this was about three times as large. From here, the water ran under Julia Street and Springwood Street into Devil Hole. There was a well at the Carex Street end of the Fold from which about 30 houses got their water - no piped supply to any of them. And by the track up to Dick Field was Judy Spout, a spring which supplied the purist water in the country! [Recently, I believe some enterprising character tried to market it as bottled mineral water - certainly the spout is securely fenced off - Editor.]

Just round the corner from No 9, Carr Fold, and parallel with Back Springwood Street, there was a stone building. The first part was No 7 s coalshed. Second an earth toilet. Third a tip for ashes and rubbish and fourth two earth toilets or lays. (There were never any tippers around the Carr Fold, Gutter and Springwood Street area.) One, two or three families shared each toilet. There was a bobbin for the toilets



Earth toilets were common up to about 1938, one, two or three being together either side of the midden. Each seat was about 3' 6" by 2' 6". Some had doors, and there was a step (a stone about 18" inches by 12" by 12").

I saw Jack HOWARTH pick this up one day, and from over his head drop it on a rat. The rat was depressed, and I was impressed! Rats were killed every day - plenty around the Devil Hole. The midden men came once a month - they stood with long leggings on, and emptied it into the muck cart. I felt sorry for the horse, but it was probably a healthier smell than some of the chemical spraying of fields from helicopters that I see now at Pilling!

INHABITANTS OF THE CARR FOLD AREA

No 1, Carr Fold - Mrs HARDMAN an elderly widow - did not work but had two lads lodging there. Both worked in the cotton mill and each had a motorbike. They seemed to have a happy set up and often played cricket with us on the dirt road.

No 3, Carr Fold - Jim LEACH (Nail em) around 65 years old in 1925, and his wife Hannah similar, both ran the shop. Aladdin s Cave. Sweets / d lucky packets, fruit veg etc to silk stockings, all kinds of tins, cakes, bread, butter etc, cigs and twist etc. Not forgetting the paraffin lamp to light up the two steps on the short path. Incidentally, uncles and aunt to my family. He had hen pens with about 200 hens and a balance of cocks. These were much troubled with foxes in the 1920s and 30s - 20 were killed in one cote, but none eaten.

In the school holidays, we used to go up Dickfield or on Holcombe Moor for the day or collect dandelion leaves for Uncle Jim s hens. The eggs were very tasty - today s are not the same! Is it due to the dandelion leaves?

From about 1880 to the 1920s, Jim LEACH was a local foot runner, what we might now call a fell runner. He got a medal in the 1914-18 War for bringing up rations through heavy German gunfire and flak. A massive cart - eight wheeler - with 12 horses. He had a way with animals my father said - whippet, greyhounds. In the trenches, up to the knees in mud, no food, and Uncle Jim sillhouetted against the fires, bullets, cannon fire - he favoured the devil coming from Hell. Raced through the German lines at a hell of a speed, horses foaming at the mouth, charmed life, and across our lines to a tremendous cheer!

Locally, the runners might run a mile, five, ten or 14 - Ramsbottom Bury, Edenfield, Ewood Bridge, Helmshore, Holcombe Brook for money. They backed themselves, and according to reports Uncle Jim made a living out of this. As well as foot running, Uncle Jim also had a whippet which helped him finance his small shop. He also backed with bookies who used to be at all top crown green bowling matches. One story was how he got a good bowler, Tom YATES, and told him to meet him at the Rose n Crown green at 7-30am. He showed him a mark about 27 yards and back, and had him practise for an hour a morning at 7-30 for a fortnight. No one saw him - they don t play greens before 2-00 o clock. The one proviso was that he played with 31b woods that Jim provided. Normal woods are 21b 4oz to 21b 12oz, so 31b unheard of. After Jim was satisfied that Tom YATES had the length off, he arranged a match with the Lancashire champion for three pounds, a lot of money when 18s Od was a wage. 51 up was the game, toss up for the Jack, Tom lost the toss and his opponent was 38 to 0 before Tom got it. He got on the mark, and ran out 51 - 38. [All this gambling would of course then have been illegal! - Editor.]

No 5, Can Fold - Tom BROOKS and his wife Carrie both worked in the cotton mill, but Carrie was clerical. No family. They left in 1933, and bought a newsagents in

Great Harwood. I used to cycle to Great Harwood with, and for Christmas presents for a year or two. Good friends.

No 7, Carr Fold - Tom HANSON and his wife Maud had five children in 1925. Florence 8, Fred 7, Tom 5, Peter 3 and Ann (who died at 18 months). Money was scarce. Father dut of work, no dole. Means test and food coupons. We attended St Andrew's School, grandfather Fred lived round the corner in Dundee Lane. So we went there for dinner. No school meals. Father eventually got a job as a fitter at the Gasworks in 1928 by then we owed 1 10s 4d at Uncle Jim's shop.

No 9, Can Fold - Jim MILLS and his wife Jessie had two children. Jim worked shifts at The Square Mill.

No 80, Carr Street - Mr and Mrs BROMLEY.

No 2, Carr Fold - Seth Warburton and his wife Millie - no children. Both worked in the cotton mill, both wore clogs. To us they were rich because they had a 10 / d tin of salmon and / lb of tomatoes 2d for their Sunday tea.

No 4, Carr Fold - Jack Howarth road worker, council. Mrs Howarth housewife 1 daughter Sarah (wore shawl and clogs) and worked in cotton mill although she was only 7 or 8 years old. I knew she was beautiful. Her father when drunk chased her round the Fold, swearing. He'd give her a good hiding with his bootlace. Sarah flew into our house for sanctuary frequently and we put the droplatch on the door. Mrs Howarth baked and almost every house got a loaf or cake.

No 6, Carr Fold - Tom Kay and his wife Agnes, both cotton workers.

No 8, Carr Fold - Monks, mechanic, cycles, sewing machines.

No 1, Carex Street - the FOX family (George, Mary, Billy and one other) moved from here to Top Road (ie the Holcombe to Helmsshore road) about 1931 - to about 1/4 mile from top of Hedgehog Valley. ELLIOTs were the next in residence. A rag and bone man with a donkey.

No 3, Carex Street - Mr and Mrs Jim MILLS, Jim, Jessica and Wilfred. Father worked in engineering. Mother did not work. Women did not work in this period if they had families.

No 5, Carex Street - Miss WALSH, spinster. Looked after her fruit garden (about 20 by 10 yards) which was between her house and the well. I think she had an income off some shares!

Also on Carex Street at some time were the ELMs, an elderly couple, with one bachelor son who worked at the paper mill.

No 1, Springwood Street - Mrs PLATT, widow.

No 5, Springwood Street - Miss Peggy PLATT, spinster, daughter of Mrs PLATT. Entrance up entry. I believe she still lives there. Related to Jim MILLS who was at Carex Street. You could see all the lodge from her window, and she used to keep an eye on it - I believe she had some connection with the mill. There was a weir and a sluice gate between it and the lodge. I believe water power was used right up to closing, as well as the steam engine. None of the people in Carr Fold worked in Can Mill, as far as I know.

No 7, Springwood Street - Mrs HITCHEN, widow and Harry. Father killed in 1914-18 war. Bury Grammar School Scholar. Became an insurance man, moving

eventually to Garden Street (died about 1990).

No 9, Springwood Street - Mr and Mrs Jack LOWNDES - worked in cotton, comfortably off. I found her purse in Can Street one Saturday morning about 1928 with 8 17s 3d in, and her name and address on Springwood Street. Took it straight to the house, Mr Jack came to the door and on seeing me he gave me the Distant Drums look, but after explaining and giving him the purse, he was utterly non-plussed! Probably knowing in what desperate straits we were in, no work, no dole, in debt to Uncle Jim, barely clothed or shod... too many of us etc. He gave me a shilling and thanked me profusely. Later he brought a parcel of food and three days after bought me a cricket bat 2s 6d. Would they have missed 8 17s 3d? Where would it have done most good?

St Andrew's School - Mr BOARDMAN Headmaster. School motto adopted by the majority of scholars was 'Do What is Right with All Thy Might and Let What Will Come Of It. I suggest Parliament adopts it and ride white horses!

No 11, Springwood Street - Mr and Mrs MAGNALL and Jean Oliver, adopted. Married at 16 years old.

No 13, Springwood Street - Mr and Mrs Jack LEDGER had two lads.

No 17, Springwood Street - Harry BUTLER.

No 19, Springwood Street - HARRUPS. Parents worked in cotton mill. William and Winifred came to St Andrew's School. Both played cricket and football up the Gutter with the other lads and girls. Sex was irrelevant, also dammed the water in the pond there - sail boats home made! Peggy on Hitchin's Mill top. Winter warmers from cotton wool blower. Swam in Springwood Lodge which fed Hitchin's Mill and attempted to climb the *Rose and Crown* Bowling Green wall.

No 21, Springwood Street - Harry KNOWLES and wife, children Will, Fred, Harry May, attended St Andrew's Day School. Father worked nights at Square Mill. Camped at Grants Tower with Fred and Harry. Harry was troubled with St Vitus Dance, 2 o'clock in the morning he awoke, danced in the tent on us and pulled the tent down on top of us!

No 23, Springwood Street - Norman ECCLES (1920s and 1930s), only son. In the mid 1930s, this house became a shop - torches, lamps etc. Parents worked in cotton. St Paul's School as scholar. Fair cricketer, played with Ramsbottom, mate of Syd HIRD, Australian Pro for Ramsbottom 1930s. COTTRIL's meat pies - luscious - Where did they go? Lost him due to War. Camped out up by Tub Lodge with him and Jack BERRY and James Aubrey Greswell PENNY and Fred and Harry KNOWLES, from next house - all one hot summer. Trout for breakfast, tickled from the moat. Eggs from the farm, close to Hedgehog Valley where George PICKUP buried his gold sovereigns - never found!

Bill MARKHAM - lived next to *Rose and Crown* in what is now the car park. Went to Holcombe School 1920s-30s. Boxed at Belle Vue about 1935-8 as 'The Unknown (masked).

Headline sports page. He was about 16 stone when 16 years old. His mother said he had 12 muffins with ham and six scones for lunch. When 18 or 19, in the 30s, he drove the Council's steam roller. The Rake had a very severe gradient of 1 in 4. The steam roller (with Bill working on the road) ran away. There were possibly still one

or two houses immediately opposite the bottom of the Rake. Bill ran to the front of the steam roller and braced himself and gradually held it until his mates scotched it - tremendous performance! It was reported in the *Ramsbottom Observer*. Still talked about by anyone left. Four yards short of the house! Probably more episodes - I don't know!!

Frederick Ashworth Hanson, 50, Central Avenue, Birkdakt Southport PR8 3EQ

A WALK ON THE WILDSIDE: FLORA AROUND NUTTALL

This is a short walk of less than a mile around the Nuttall Park and Nuttall village areas of Ramsbottom to examine some of the common and not so common wild flowers which abound there.

We begin our walk from the car park in Nuttall Park itself. Leaving by its Nuttall Hall Road entrance we turn right (south) onto a lane which takes us towards Jacob's Ladder. Before we reach there, however, notice a stone built waterfall on the left feeding a small stream behind a low wall. The bank here is pink in spring with the flowers of **purslane**, **Crocus** and **daffodils** have been planted nearby. Follow the water flow for a few yards to the south. Again, in the spring, the view over this wall is golden with the glow of **lesser celandine** intermingled with the white nodding head of **windflower** - the wood anemone. As the season progresses these are slowly replaced by a green carpet of **dogs mercury**. Occasionally, the white globular heads of **wild garlic** may be spotted growing along this bank, more so towards Jacob's Ladder where recent plantings are beginning to spread rapidly. This is the wild **ramsons** - the plant which according to one interpretation gave Ramsbottom its name. Lean over the wall here to see many clumps of **hart's tongue** fern growing from between its stones. Later on this will be joined by the delicate violet veined flowers of **wood sorrel** whose clover like leaves taste refreshingly like the peel of green apples. But don't eat too much - in large quantities this plant is poisonous. The pink stars of **herb robert** also adorn this wall in summer. A drop of sap crushed from its stems and rubbed into the face and wrists makes a very effective midge repellent. Alongside the base of this wall, where it leads right to the steps of Jacob's Ladder, is an inconspicuous, but unusual flower - the **enchanter's nightshade**. From the end of June this is adorned with tiny white flowers - the only ones in Europe to consist of just two petals - possibly one of the reasons this plant was associated with Circe - the ancient goddess of magic.

Continue across the river via the green metal footbridge, and immediately you will see on the right a stile leading into what was once the thriving Ocean Chemical works. Maybe because of these chemicals, still inherent in the soil, this site is well worth an hour's perusal by the interested wild flower seeker. The left side of the stile as you pass onto the now derelict land is a mass of **hone suckle** and several **hael** trees grow nearby. The overgrown area to the left contains several broad leaved **helleborine** in high summer and **two blade** has also been recorded. A few yards further south, next to the fence, is a large and spreading patch of **yellow archangel**.

Once over the stile, we will follow the path round to the right. After only a few yards this bends left to avoid the river, but on the right hand side of the bend near the roots of a tree you will find several plants of **Solomon's seal** with its creamy white

of **bluebells**, **ramsons**, **purslane** and the odd **primrose**.

Follow this path for another 50 yards or so, keeping an eye out for **yellow rattle** on the right and **purple woundwort** on the left. The leaves of the latter are covered in fine hairs and feel velvety to the touch. This made them ideal for binding wounds in the past. Continue along the track until you stand alongside a large metal clad ring resting on the river bed, probably a remnant from the old chemical works. The bank here leading down to the water's edge was once covered in a variety of rare orchids, unfortunately removed by a Manchester preservation society several years ago. Many **common spotted orchids** still thrive here in mid-summer, mingled with **figwort**, **red campion**, **lad's mantle**, **cuckoo flower**, **dame's violet**, **fat hen**, **bush vetch**, **tufted vetch**, **garlic mustard**, **tormentil**, **several speedwells** and the all pervading **Himalayan balsam** and **Japanese knotweed**. Retrace your footsteps a few yards but this time take the footpath to the south, heading directly into the centre of the site. Where it broadens out after only a few seconds into quite a wide lane, you will notice small mounds of rubble under the trees on the right. Presumably, due to whatever is under these mounds, this area attracted the very rare **yellow bird's nest**. This unfortunately has declined in recent years and I could not find any in 1996, so it may now be extinct. But who knows what the future may bring?

Carrying on along this track to the south, watch out for **bush and tufted vetch** on the left, closely followed by the pink flowers of **French cranesbill**, disappearing slightly under the ever expanding undergrowth of brambles. Also along this length you should spot the odd bit of **hog weed and ragwort**, **broad leaved**, **rosebay** and **great hair willowherbs**. The ragwort and willowherbs are good reminders of the nearby railway. Their delicate 'parachute' type seeds spread rapidly across the countryside in the wake of the rapidly growing steam railways many years ago. A large patch of **michaelmas daisies** much closer to the line probably arrived in a similar manner.

Near the end of this patch, a few yards before the exit stile, you will see a turning off to the right. A brief excursion up here may be rewarding if you can spare a few minutes. Several yards up on the right grows an **apple tree** - a heavy cropper, but unfortunately the target of children in recent times. If you follow the path right up to the railway line you will see another stile and fence to the left slowly vanishing under more **blackberry bushes**. You will need to search carefully for this, but the edge of the bramble patch on this side of the stile hides another unusual plant - the **adder's tongue**.

Go back past the apple tree to the previous stile now and cross. You will see in front of you the last remaining house of the once bustling Nuttall village. This also served for many years as the foreman's office for the Ocean Chemical works, but very recently has been almost totally rebuilt as a private residence. Ten yards before this house, if you duck under the trees to the left, next to the river, there grows a large patch of **common spotted orchid** - over 60 specimens in a four foot circle last year.

Continue along the road past the houses but notice two tracks leading off under the trees to the left, where the road bends right up the hill. Take the second of these. It can be a bit muddy in bad weather, so be careful. Half way down you will pass a largish patch of **creeping jennet** on the right. This track emerges next to a second green footbridge over the river - our way back to the park - but for now we'll take a brief diversion off to the right towards the railway cutting. The field we enter is a forest of pink spires of **bistort** in summer - 'sweaty feet', as it is known locally. Try

smelling one and you will soon realise why. A tarmac path follows the side of the railway cutting at the far end of the field - lined on both sides with **ground elder**, **cow parsley**, bistort and the lovely aniseed smelling (and tasting) **sweet cicel**. The young seed pods are particularly tasty! You may find the odd sprig of **sheep s sorrel** too - becoming more common in the next field towards Summerseat.

At this point we will back track to the green bridge and cross over the river. A large **pussy willow** tree overhangs the far end of this bridge, its catkins bursting with yellow pollen in spring. Turn left now - the path follows the river all the way back to Jacob s Ladder, a scenic part of the route, but devoid of anything new in the way of flowers apart from a patch of ivy covering a wall next to the river. There are several patches of **pink purslane** and **red campion** on the way. This path takes you directly under Jacob s Ladder and up onto the lane leading back to the start of our walk. Happy hunting!

Joe CROMPTON, 10, Beechwood Avenue, Ramsbottom BLO OBH

SLEDGING IN RAMSBOTTOM BETWEEN THE WARS

As we go to press, Ramsbottom has enjoyed an Indian Summer of a September, but may well experience a fierce winter. `Ramsbottom, Fred HANSON said to me earlier this year when we were discussing its weather in contrast to that of Southport, where he now lives, `the one place you could guarantee there d be always snow in winter, and you could go sledging! I had images of the children today who resort to the bank between Albert Street and Callender Street, or to the slope to the north of St Andrew s church down Church Field. But Fred was speaking of his childhood of 70 years ago. `There were only a few coal carts on the roads in the 1920s, he explained, describing how the Rake was used for sledging!

Nor was this precarious pastime a male-only affair. Amy GREENHALGH (nee ENTWISTLE) reminisced as part of our taping project in 1988 about a childhood just off Carr Street and later `up Tanners . They would sledge `right from Holcombe Church ... down on the left hand side of the Rake over the top of Rostrons Road .

... the you shot across the road down the right hand side over Callender Street and ended up at the Newmarket. But you only did it once because you were too buggered to walk back up again!

This toboggan run down to the *Newmarket Inn* (3, Market Place, in premises now occupied by the Community Education Service) must have been around half a mile long! Some of the lads, however were even more daring. `If the gates were closed, Fred HANSON recalls, `we d hit them. Otherwise we d come to a stop just where you turn in for the cricket club! And remember that Bridge Street was then on a bus route!

It s as well that there is as now so much traffic on the Rake - imagine slithering up that one in four climb (dangerous enough today) and running the risk of being crippled by a flying sledge. I bet the adults cursed those children just as much we moan about skate boards and pavement-cyclists!

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